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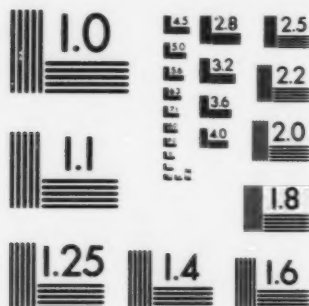


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ministry of
environment

**Mission, Principles and Priorities:
A Ministry Management Plan**

September 1989



**MINISTRY OF
ENVIRONMENT**

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INTRODUCTION

Government is increasingly challenged to balance competing environmental, community and economic goals.

Both the National and British Columbia Task Forces on Environment and Economy have advanced the concept of sustainable development as an approach to balance these interests, recognizing:

- that they are interdependent;
- equally important; and
- that the balance must be sustainable over the long-term.

The government of British Columbia has accepted in principle the report of the B.C. Task Force on Environment and Economy and, along with other provincial governments, has endorsed the report of the National Task on Environment and Economy.

The Ministry of Environment is taking this opportunity to reaffirm its mandate and underlying principles within the context of a sustainable development strategy for the province.

At the core of the Ministry's philosophy is the belief that the environment is everyone's responsibility and that the Ministry's primary roles are:

- to provide leadership in programs of environmental conservation and protection, and
- to seek partnerships with individuals, industry, special interest groups and other levels of government to achieve a quality environment within the context of sustainable development.

MISSION STATEMENT

British Columbians want to see a quality environment achieved and sustained — fresh air, clean water, healthy soil, and abundant and varied plant and animal life.

To meet this goal, the MISSION STATEMENT of the Ministry is:

To encourage a sustainable environment, curb environmental degradation, and ensure that environmental management can meet the changing needs and priorities of the many users of our resources.

Our mission has several elements:

as Leader

- to provide leadership in building environmental principles into day-to-day decisions of governments, corporations and private individuals;

as Guardian

- to monitor and report on the state of the environment and to ensure that defensible environmental standards are set and complied with;

as Resource Steward

- to manage natural habitats, fish, wildlife, and water resources for ecological diversity and for the economic and recreational opportunities they provide.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Ministry is guided by the following principles:

Sustaining the Environment

- The diversity and integrity of the natural environment must be sustained.
- Sustainable development requires a new relationship with our environment, one in which environmental factors are part of economic decisions. Our natural resources should be managed in a way that takes into account not only their present value but also their importance to future generations.

Community and Environment

- The public has a right to participate in decision-making on environmental issues, and therefore meaningful mechanisms for public involvement and access to information are essential.
- Community health must be protected.

Conflict Resolution

- Resources should be allocated fairly amongst users, and therefore integrated resource-planning processes that allow equitable access for all affected parties are essential.
- Conflicts among competing resource uses should be resolved fairly and as easily as possible, and therefore dispute resolution mechanisms such as negotiation, arbitration and reconciliation should be available to affected parties.

Sharing the Responsibility

- Every decision we take as individuals and collectively as a society has the potential to harm the natural environment. Thus, environmental conservation is a shared responsibility.
- A wide array of management approaches, including rigorous regulatory enforcement, economic and pricing policies, public education and self regulation, must be employed in encouraging compliance with environmental standards and a shift away from environmentally damaging activities.
- Those who cause environmental degradation should pay for the cost of regulation, monitoring and rehabilitation.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Ministry's priorities for the next five years are:

- **Leadership** — to provide leadership in incorporating environmental concerns into daily decision-making of individuals and organizations.
- **Sustainable Development** — to work closely with government, industry and community representatives in the Round Table process in preparing a sustainable development strategy for the province, to strengthen integrated resource-management processes and to develop dispute-resolution processes.
- **Public Understanding** — to promote public understanding of environmental issues and participation in solutions.
- **Environmental Management** — to promote economic and recreational opportunities and ecological diversity by improving the management of natural habitats, water, fish, and wildlife resources.
- **Environmental Threats and Waste Control** — to reduce threats to the environment, especially from toxic and other waste products and oil spills, and to improve the level of compliance with environmental standards.
- **Polluter-Pay Policies** — to implement polluter-pay policies that will fairly allocate the costs of environmental management to individuals and institutions engaging in environmentally damaging activities.

IMPLEMENTING PRIORITIES:

Agenda for 1989/90 and 1990/91

1. Leadership

- Develop environmental protocol agreements with appropriate Ministries to coordinate responsibility for specific environmental issues and incorporate environmental principles into their program design and operating procedures.
- Develop innovative management tools and technologies to help achieve sustainable development, such as 'State of the Environment' reporting.
- Work with other jurisdictions, including U.S. Pacific States, in harmonizing environmental standards and addressing transboundary environmental issues, such as oil spills, air pollution, and disposal of hazardous wastes.

2. Sustainable Development

- Work with government, industry and community representatives in the Round Table process to prepare a sustainable development strategy for the Province.
- Establish formal integrated resource planning mechanisms at the provincial and regional levels.
- Develop fair and equitable processes for environmental mediation, negotiation and conflict resolution.

3. Public Understanding

- Increase public understanding of environmental issues through formal education, curriculum development, community based initiatives and the distribution of

information.

- Encourage applied environmental research, involvement by youth in environmental management projects, and greater public access to environmental information.

Specific initiatives include:

- Environment Youth Corps Program,
- Enhanced education and tourist programs at fish hatcheries,
- Centres of Environmental Research and Engineering at B.C. Universities,
- Assistance to private organizations in research on innovative environmental technologies, and
- Expanded public information and education programs.

4. Environmental Management

- To promote economic and recreational opportunities and ecological diversity by improving the management and allocation of water, fish and wildlife, and ecological resources.

Specific initiatives include:

- a new trout hatchery,
 - fish and wildlife habitat enhancement,
 - land acquisition and management for fish and wildlife,
 - a water management information system,
 - wildlife viewing stations,
 - aquatic weed control,
 - habitat fund surcharge,
 - angling guide policy, and
 - grizzly bear/forest harvesting interactions study.
- Improve the Ministry's response to requests from other agencies and the private sector for environmental input to logging, mining, agricultural and other development projects, by improving inventory and increasing on-site operational capability.

- Improve policies and procedures to reduce the "red tape" and time required for the public to obtain licences, permits or decisions.

5. Environmental Threats and Waste Control

- Reduce and control waste discharge and other threats to the environment through:
 - comprehensive enforcement and compliance strategies,
 - improved environmental standards,
 - solid and special waste management plans,
 - contingency plans for environmental emergencies,
 - recycling and resource recovery programs, and
 - liability and risk assessment.
 - Increase clean-up and enforcement activities for existing chronic waste management problems. Specific initiatives already advanced include:
 - control of organochlorine compounds,
 - control of biomedical wastes,
 - control of sulphur content in fuels,
 - regulation of anti-sapstain chemicals,
 - regulation of placer mining, and
 - management of water quality problems in the Okanagan Basin.
- New initiatives include:**
- sewage collection and treatment projects,
 - chlorofluorocarbon regulation,
 - contaminated sites legislation and clean-up of priority sites such as the False Creek lands,
 - underground storage tank controls,

- acid mine drainage abatement, and
- control of sulphur dioxide emissions.

6. Polluter-Pay Policies

- Develop initiatives that impose liability upon parties responsible for damages to the environment. Specific tools include:
 - waste-discharge permit fees based on the quantity and quality of wastes discharged,
 - environmental excise taxes on difficult-to-dispose-of products,
 - liability provisions for the clean-up of industrial sites that constitute an environmental or public health hazard,
 - promotion of municipal user-fee systems for both solid waste and industrial sewage treatment systems, and
 - transferable discharge-permit systems for receiving environments at or near waste assimilation capacity.
- Increase the use of economic incentives to induce public and private sectors to improve environmental performance.
- Increase the resources available for environmental management by pursuing private and corporate sponsorship and cost-sharing programs with federal and local governments.